

Guidelines for Slides

2006 ARM Science Team Meeting



Good slides amplify and clarify your message, stimulate interest, and help you keep on track. The following guidelines were developed to help you in preparing your slides for the Science Team Meeting. Additional resources are available <http://stm.arm.gov>.

- After the title slide, provide a “roadmap” listing the points to be covered. A graphical roadmap is more effective than a text list¹.
- Divide the talk into no more than 4, preferably 3, sections.
- Use transition slides when you move to another part of your roadmap.
- Use only one main idea per slide, stated clearly in the slide title.
- Use key words and phrases, not sentences (except for quotations).
- Do not use phrases over two lines.
- Do not use more than 3-4 items in any list. If more, split up and reorganize.
- Add detail with your voice, not by adding text. The watchword for text: less is more.
- For text readability, use 24-pt text for the body, larger for titles/headlines.
- Choose sans serif fonts available on all PCs and Macs.
- Don't use all caps.
- Use a consistent style: format, font, lettering size, and placement of text. Set on Slide Master.
- Eliminate things you aren't going to talk about long enough to make them understandable. This goes for both graphs and text.
- Make graphics as simple as possible; most journal graphics need to be simplified and be given larger fonts (at least 20-pt text for all labels and legends).
- Draw arrows to, or circles around, parts of graphs on which you want your audience to focus; these can be animated to appear on command. The dancing red dot of a laser pointer is far inferior.
- Make sure your movies work on any platform. Macs support some movie formats, PCs others.
- Choose high-contrast colors and use simple backgrounds like plain colors or clouds. Avoid the blinding “white-screen effect”.
- Leave your summary slide on the screen during the question period.

¹ Alley, M. 2003: The Craft of Scientific Presentations. <http://www.writing.eng.vt.edu/csp.html>